Gad Lowrey Yale (1810–1882)

Origin and Family

Born Feb 26, 1810. Died Apr 14, 1882, age 72 years.

Father: Heman Yale (1781–1825)
Mother: Rhoda Lowrey
Spouse: 1st, Abby W. Reed (1816–1849), 2nd Mary M. W. Wilsey (1821–1894)

Children:[1]

By Abby W. Reed

1. Frederick Yale died in infancy
2. Frank L. Yale (1848–)

By Mary M. W. Wilsey, Lynn Township, Knox County, Illinois

3. Sherman H Yale (1850–)
4. Miles LaMott Yale (1852–)
5. Adella Yale (1855–1933)
6. Edson Fremont Yale (1856–)
7. Rodney Horace Yale (1864–1937)

From Rodney Horace Yale[1]: “Gad Lowrey Yale, of Galva, Illinois, was married October 16, 1836, to Abby W. Reed, a daughter of William Reed, of Goshen, Conn., and later of Knox County, Ill. She was born in 1816. He married secondly to Mary M. W. Wilsey, August 26, 1849, who was born December 13, 1821, at Troy, Bradford Co., Penn. She was a daughter of William H. Wilsey, and Catharine Maynard Wilsey. William H. and Catharine M. Wilsey had three children: William H. Wilsey, Jr., late of Mapleton and Little Sioux, Iowa, born May 6, 1822; Sabrina (Mrs. Jacob Cramer) of Galva, Kans., and Mary M. Wilsey Yale. Catharine Maynard was born in Vermont, and went with her parents to Pennsylvania, where she married Mr. Wilsey. He died while their three children were quite young, and she married Oliver Stoddard, and moved in 1836, first to Ohio, then to Michigan, and thence to Peoria, Co., Ill., where Catharine died at the age of 50 years. Mrs. Mary M. W. Yale was a school teacher for a number of years in Illinois before her marriage.”

Occupation and Property

Gad Lowrey Yale moved with his family from South Canaan, Conn., to Knox County, Ill., in 1840, and purchased quite a large tract of land in Lynn Township, Knox County. The country there was new at that time, and Chicago, then only a small place, was the favored trading- point, 140 miles distant. A trip to Chicago, with wagons loaded with wheat and hauled with ox teams, was not an unusual, yet a formidable undertaking in those days; returning with supplies for the farm and home. The material for a large barn built on the Lynn Township farm, was partly hauled from Chicago in this manner. Mr. Yale was an enterprising, energetic, genial and courageous man of unswerving integrity, and respected by all who knew him. He was an invalid for the last six years of his life, and died on his Lynn Township farm, April 14, 1882. Yale school in Lynn Township was named after him.

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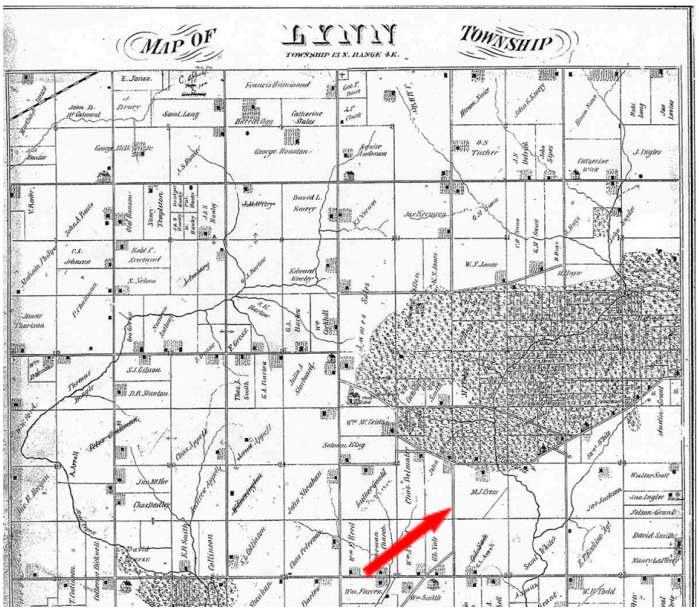
Mrs. Mary M. W. Yale died March 7, 1894, at the home of her daughter Mrs. Adella Yale-Hunt, at Palisade, Nebr. She was a well educated woman of a most kind and unselfish disposition and devoted to her children. His first wife [Abbey Reed] died February 5, 1849."[1]

Gad Lowrey was the father of Rodney Horace Yale, the last born child when Gad Lowrey was 54 years old. Rodney's brief praise of his father above was disciplined and consistent with comments of other ancestors even though he clearly greatly admired his father and could have written much more.

In 1840, at age 30, Gad Lowrey left the safety of Goshen, Connecticut and headed westward some 900 miles to Chicago. "He found Chicago to be a small city situated in swampy ground and rather uninviting. A friend had suggested that he locate there with him in the grain business but he decided to go into the interior of the State. After locating in Knox County, Illinois, he made trips to Chicago, a distance of 140 miles, with wheat and brought supplies home, including lumber (oak) for the farm buildings."[2]

The journey from South Canaan to Chicago must have been difficult - taking several weeks through barely traveled roads. The lure of open, inexpensive land must have been great. Lynn Township was an unpopulated wilderness just 10 years before they arrived, and in 1878, some 38 years later, the township still did not have a single church.[3] Some 122 years later, the 2000 U.S. Census lists the township as having just 316 residents.

In 1870, the Lynn Township map shows many settlers:



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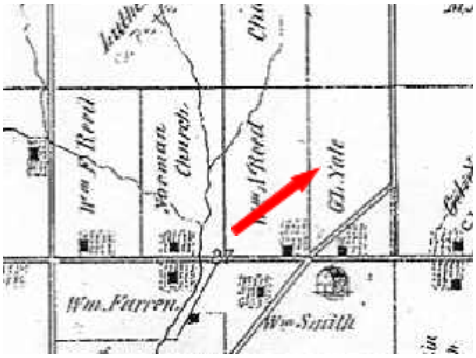
On closer inspection of the bottom section we have the land owned by Gad Lowrey Yale:



In 1934, Rodney Horace Yale wrote, “The home farm of my parents in Lynn Township consisted of 260 acres. The residence was a good sized farm home and the barn was 40 x 44 feet, rather high, and with mows for the hay on each side, above the stalls for the stock. It was used mainly for horses. Both the residence and the barn were built mainly of oak, which was hauled by ox teams from Chicago. There was a large apple orchard of the finest varieties and when I first remember the trees were large and full grown. The residence was located at the edge of this orchard.” [2]

“Our house had a large parlor, a large living room, a large kitchen and five bedrooms. There was a large blue grass lawn at the front, in a fine maple grove. There were many flowering shrubs, such as honeysuckles, snow ball bushes, etc.” [2]

“Corn was the principal crop. Considerable oats were raised, principally for horse feed. We also grew considerable wheat in the earlier years, but later on we discontinued growing wheat almost altogether, due to the competition of the western wheat growers. Our section was a fine farming country. We raised many hogs and usually fed most of the corn to them. We also raised some cattle and kept enough milk cows to supply the family with milk and butter, but hogs and corn were the principal products of the farm.” [2]

“Father owned a ‘Wood Lot’ northeast of our farm, in Fraker’s Grove”, consisting of, I believe, 5 acres of fine timber; there we got our fence posts and fence rails, and wood for the stoves.” [2]

The Civil War Era

Gad Lowrey did not fight in the Civil War but his first born son Frank did:

> “Mr. [Frank] Yale was born April 14, 1848, in Lynn Township, Knox County, Illinois, both of his parents - Gad Lowrey and Abbey (Reed) Yale - having been natives of the state of Connecticut. They departed the Nutmeg State when young people, the father, who was a farmer, died in Illinois. The boyhood days of Mr. Yale in Illinois were shadowed to some degree by the approach and outbreak of the Civil war. At thirteen years of age at the time the first guns were fired upon Fort Sumter, the impatience of the high-spirited young boy to take a real part in the struggle and to give his support to the cause with which he was in sympathy increased with the passing of the months, and in March, 1864, he enlisted in Company G, of the One Hundred and Twelfth Illinois Infantry, and served until August 13, 1865, when he was mustered out.

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In this time he was plunged into the thickest of the conflict, seeing much fighting and covering much territory, but he never missed a day's service. He was with Sherman on the march from Chattanooga to Atlanta and thence to Nashville, during that time serving with Schofield corps."[4]

Rodney Horace Yale, who was born during the Civil War, said, "During the Civil War we were surrounded on two sides by "Copperheads", sympathizers with the Rebels, then known as "Knights of the Golden Circle." One was Jack Grass, whom father saved from hanging when he was in Galva on the day news arrived that Lincoln had been shot (April 1865). Jack has said in the presence of Union soldiers that it was "the best news he had ever heard". Father got him into his wagon and headed for home, before he was reached by the infuriated people. Austin Smith was another neighbor, and his wife's people were also bitter enemies of the Northern government. No one now living can appreciate what the Union people of the North, and the supporters of President Lincoln's Government had to contend with during those times" [2]

Honored by the Local School Board

A reference in the 1912 Directory of Public Schools in Knox County confirms that Gad Lowrey was the namesake for a school in Lynn Township.[5] Evidently this school, like many others at the time, was a one room - one teacher school listed as "gradeless".

District No. 8, Yale School
S. A. King, President……LaFayette, 1912
Lewis E. Gibbs, Clerk……..…LaFayette, 1911
John Goff, Director……..LaFayette, 1910
Ella R. Kewish, Teacher……..Galva

"The school house in our school district was about one half mile west from our home and was called **YALE school house**. My father was the head of the School Board for many years. By the time I was old enough to attend advanced schools (c. 1880), my father was an invalid and I was unable to leave home for such a purpose." [2]

End of Life

Courtesy Bonnie Yale

"Father's illness was caused by sun-stroke (in 1876 at age 66), received before we moved to the new home on the Illinois farm, while he was staking out a line for fence posts which a man was to set for him that day. It was in the early morning and very hot and he hurried to get the lines set before the man came. Father never fully recovered from that sun-stroke, and finally, years later, was the cause of his death." [2]

"My father, who died in Illinois April 14, 1882, was interred in the LaFayette, Illinois, Cemetery and we had a brown or red granite tombstone erected over his grave and that of his first wife Abby W. Yale" [2,6]

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Research Notes

Online Genealogy References:
WikiTree ID: Yale-732
FamilySearch ID: LZFV-2WN
Find a Grave Memorial: 55811392

Further Reading:

- Yale, Max Brian. *Guide to the Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection.* 2025

- Yale, Max Brian. *Yale Family Coat of Arms* - Origin and History. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*, 2025

References

1. Yale, Rodney Horace. *Yale Genealogy and History of Wales*. Beatrice, NE: Milburn & Scott, 1908. Ref no. 1080 page 330

2. Rodney Horace Yale. *Autobiographical Notes (Manuscript).* Private Collection, 1934

3. Chas. C. Chapman, History of Knox County, Illinois, Chicago: Blakley, Brown, and Marsh Printers, 1878

4. Livingston, Joel Thomas. A History of Jasper County, Missouri and its People. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1912

5. Knox County Retired Teachers Association . 1912 Directory of Public Schools. (Archived on Facebook)

6. Find a Grave Memorial 15621564

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